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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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Pentagon Reports Testing Of Sub Missile in Russia

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1 The Soviet Union has conducted an intensive series of tests of a new submarine-launched missile from a submerged launching site in the White Sea off Archangel, Pentagon sources said today.

2 Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird said in a press conference Thursday there had been eight tests of the sub-launched missile and eight tests of intercontinental ballistic missiles since the strategic arms limitation agreements had been signed in Moscow on May 26.

3 Laird's comment was one of the rare occasions on which American officials have talked openly of so-called "internal" tests in the Soviet Union. The U.S. practice generally, in the past, has been to provide details only on tests in which the missiles landed in the ocean outside the Soviet Union.

Submerged Test Bed

4 The tests referred to by Laird all were conducted over a distance of about 3,500 miles, with the dummy warheads impacting on the Kamchatka Peninsula north of Japan, according to Pentagon sources.

5 Earlier tests of the SSN-3 Sawfly submarine-launched missile were conducted from a land launching site. But Pen-

tagon sources said the test flights were now being launched from a submerged test bed, not an operational submarine off Archangel.

6 Of the eight missiles tested, informed sources said, several were fired in a flurry in early June.

7 The tests indicate that the Soviet Union is moving closer to the time it hopes to deploy its Yankee II missile submarine which will carry 12 of the big Sawfly missiles rather than the 16 shorter-range missiles carried by the earlier Yankee class submarines. The earlier Yankees are similar to the American Polaris.

8 The eight ICBM tests referred to by Laird involved one test of a big SS-9 missile on May 26 plus tests of both the SS-11 and SS-13 missiles. The liquid-fueled SS-11 and the solid-fueled SS-13 are both classified as "light" missiles and are roughly the size of the American Minuteman.

Vandenberg Equivalent

9 The ICBM's were launched from the Plesetsk test station—which has been described as the Soviet version of the American Vandenberg Air Force Base, which is almost exclusively a military operation. Those tests, too, impacted in the Kamchatka target area.

Plesetsk, one of the three

major Soviet launch sites, is north of Moscow and a short distance south of Archangel.

10 So far this year, the United States has launched 20 ICBM's. Of those, 13 were fired into the Pacific as targets in tests of the Safeguard missile defense system. The other seven were tests of the missiles themselves or training shots for missile crews.

12 Since the May 26 ceremony in Moscow, Pentagon sources said, the United States has fired only three or four missiles.

13 In both countries, tests are usually conducted in spurts. Certain components will be tested, then there will be a pause for further work on the system, and then a further series of tests.

14 Tests by both countries are permitted under the agreements.